

Message Text

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21/41

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5590

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 8458

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECT GARBLED PARAGRAPH 4. LINE THREE)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, AF

SUBJ: YEAR-END AFGHAN INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

1. SUMMARY: SINCE KABUL'S LAST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT (FEBRUARY 1975 - REFTTEL) PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD HAS REINFORCED HIS PERSONAL HOLD ON THE POWER ELEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN BY BENCHING SOME OF THE NEW PLAYERS (WHOM MANY HERE CONSIDER LEFTISTS) WHO RODE TO POWER WITH HIM IN 1973, AND REPLACING THEM WITH TRUSTED "ESTABLISHMENT" ASSOCIATES FROM THE COUNTRY'S DOMINANT OLIGARCHY -- THE MOHAMMADZAI (DAOUD'S OWN FAMILY) -- OR WITH NON-IDEOLOGICAL TECHNOCRATS. THUS DAOUD NOW (JANUARY 1, 1976) HAS ENHANCED HIS ABILITY TO CARRY OUT WHAT HE
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PERCEIVES AS A NATIONALIST - PATRIOTIC - AFGHAN

COURSE IN AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT. HE MUST ALWAYS BE SENSITIVE TO SOME DEGREE TO LEFTISTS, PARTICULARLY AS THEY RELATE TO AFGHANISTAN'S BALANCING ACT VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION, AND ALSO TO RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS WHO STILL HAVE A STRONGHOLD ON THE AFGHAN MASSES. BUT BETWEEN THESE TWO HE HAS MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER THAN HE HAD A YEAR AGO TO PURSUE HIS GOALS OF MODERNIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

2. IN MAKING THE SHIFT FROM LEFTISTS TO A MORE TRADITIONAL GOVERNING METHOD, DAOUD HAS IMPROVED HIS RELATIONS WITH ALL THE MOHAMMADZAI CLAN AND MOST ESPECIALLY WITH ABDUL WALI (DAOUD LET HIM OUT OF JAIL) WHOM SOME CONSIDER A LEADING POSSIBILITY TO REPLACE DAOUD WHEN HE LEAVES OFFICE.

3. THE ECONOMY HAS NOT BOUNDED FORWARD BUT ENOUGH HAS BEEN DONE TO GIVE MANY AFGHANS THE IMPRESSION THAT FOUNDATIONS ARE BEING LAID FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

4. THE MAIN INTERNAL EVENT PREDICTED FOR 1976 IS A NEW CONSTITUTION, AND THE MAIN ISSUE IN THE CONSTITUTION IS THE SUCCESSION. THE PACE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL REFORM WILL ALSO AFFECT THE POLITICAL SCENE BECAUSE POPULAR EXPECTATIONS ARE SLOWLY RISING.

5. DAOUD'S INTERNAL POLICIES HAVE, WE BELIEVE, STRENGTHENED AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND VIABILITY. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES THESE ARE THEREFORE HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENTS.

6. SEPTEL ASSESSES AFGHAN FOREIGN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

7. THE QUALITY AND PROCESSES OF AFGHAN POLITICS MAY NOT HAVE CHANGED GREATLY DURING 1975, BUT
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SOME OF THE SECOND-ECHELON PLAYERS DID. IN THIS SENSE 1975 MAY BE REMEMBERED AS THE YEAR OF "RETURN TO NORMALCY", OR AT LEAST A GOOD BEGINNING TOWARD THIS. THE NEW LINE-UP FOR THE GAME APPEARS TO BE THE OLDEST PLAYERS: AFGHANISTAN'S MOHAMMADZAI FAMILY AND ITS RELATED ESTABLISHMENT. THOSE WHO ARE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, SITTING ON THE BENCH CONSTITUTE "THE

NEW CROWD OF MEN WHOSE IDEOLOGY WAS (OR WAS
POPULARLY CONSIDERED TO BE) TOO FAR TO THE
LEFT, TOO DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO SOVIET POINTS OF VIEW. SOME
MEMBERS OF THIS SQUAD, NOTABLY THE PAZHWAQS, WERE THEMSELVES
CLOSE ASSOCIATES IN THE OLD PATTERNS OF FAMILY AND WEALTH.
OTHERS WERE APPARENTLY MEN ON THE MAKE, OUTSIDERS TO
ESTABLISHMENT PATTERNS WHOSE MAIN HOPE OF GAINING
STATURE WAS THROUGH NEW STYLES OF POLITICS.
A COMMON CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS "NEW CROWD"
WAS WILLINGNESS TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE NOTION THAT
IDEOLOGY SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN THE GOVERNING
OF THIS COUNTRY. THIS MADE THEM MAVERICKS IN
THIS HARD SCRABBLE POLITICAL SCENE.

8. IN THE SAME CONNECTION IT IS WORTH NOTING
THAT EVEN IN 1975 ONLY "SUPRA-AFGHAN" CONCERNS
CAN SERVE BOOTSTRAP POLITICIANS IN THIS COUNTRY.
FROM ONE SIDE ONE MAY CALL UPON (IN AN IDEO-
LOGICAL SENSE) THE POWER AND MIGHT OF SOVIET
RUSSIAN AND THE COMMUNIST WORLD, BUTTRESSED BY
VAGUE NOTIONS OF NON-ALIGNED SOLIDARITY
AND MUSLIM SOCIALISM, AND THEREBY GAIN A
CERTAIN LEGITIMACY IN AFGHAN POLITICS WHICH
"THE SYSTEM" ITSELF WOULD NEVER CONFER. FROM
THE OTHER SIDE ONE MAY CALL IN THE POWER AND
MIGHT OF ISLAM, RADIATING VAGUELY FROM JIDDA
ON WAVES OF HISTORY AND ORTHODOXY (AND MOST
RECENTLY, MONEY) AND CONFERRING CONSIDERABLE
CLOUT ON THE POLITICAL FIGURE WHO CAN PLAY
THIS GAME CONVINCINGLY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 KABUL 8458

LIMDIS

9. FOR THE AFGHAN WHO PLAYS ONLY WITH THE COUNTERS
AVAILABLE WITHIN AFGHANISTA ITSELF, THERE
IS LITTLE TO BE USED OUTSIDE THE CLAIMS OF
FAMILY AND MONEY: THERE ARE NOT LABOR UNIONS
OVER WHICH TO GAIN CONTROL, NO GREAT BUSINESSES
FROM WHOSE MONEYED SECURITY ONE MAY BULLY GOVERNMENT,
NO PRESS WITH WHICH TO SMITE PRESENT RULERS,
NO INTELLECTUAL ESTABLISHMENT IN WHICH TO FIND
REFUGE AND FROM WHICH TO SHOOT ROCKETS OF DISDAIN,
NO CLOSELY KNIT NETWORK OF COMMERCIAL INTERESTS
CAPABLE OF PERSUADING GOVERNMENT TO A PARTICULAR
COURSE OF ACTION, AND NO PROFESSIONAL ORGANI-
ZATIONS DETERMINED TO OBTAIN LARGER SLICES OF THE
NATIONAL PIE FOR DOCTORS OR LAWYERS OR TEACHERS OR
WHAT HAVE YOU. AFGHANISTAN IS SINGULARLY
BEREFT OF MODERN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

10. IN AFGHANISTA THEN, ONE MAY TAKE ONE OF
THREE ROADS TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY: THE LEFTISH
ROAD, THE RELIGIOUS ROAD, OR THE "ESTABLISHMENT"
ROAD, THE LAST WHILE CONFERRING GREATEST SAFETY
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ALSO OFFERING LEAST MOBILITY. A LAST, POSSIBLE ROAD
TO POLITICAL POWER IN AFGHANISTAN IS THE ONE USED
IN 1973 BY DAOUD HIMSELF, NAMELY A MILITARY COUP.
OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT DURING 1975 DAOUD STRENGTHENED
HIS CONTROL OVER THE AFGHAN MILITARY
THROUGH PERSONNEL CHANGES WHICH MOVED POSSIBLY
DISAFFECTED OFFICERS OUT OF THE KABUL AREA AND
STRENGTHENED PROFESSIONALISM IN THE ARMED
FORCES. ONE CAN NEVER BE SURE IN A COUNTRY LIKE
THIS WHEN A YOUNG OFFICER WILL ATTEMPT
A POWER GRAB BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY AS OF THIS
WRITING.

11. DAOUD HAS THIS YEAR BEEN STEADFAST AND
ARTICULATE IN RECOMMENDING ADHERENCE TO THE
"AFGHAN WAY" OF POLITICS, CLEAN AS A HOUND'S
TOOTH OF FOREIGN IDEOLOGY, TRADITIONAL, FAMILY OR
TRIBAL - ORIENTED, MOHAMMADZAI DIRECTED.

HIS SPEECHES IN HERAT AND KANDAHAR (KABUL 1835 AND 2834 -- 1975) WERE PARTICULARLY EXPRESSIVE STATEMENTS OF THIS VIEW. ALTHOUGH WITHOUT DOUBT A DEVOTED MUSLIM, DAOUD HAS READILY MOVED AHEAD THIS YEAR WHERE ISLAM MIGHT INTERFERE WITH DEVELOPMENT. THIS READINESS HAS BEEN MOST VISIBLE IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

12. DAOUD'S ACTIONS HAVE SPOKEN EVEN LOUDER THAN HIS WORDS. HE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY VIGOROUS IN PUTTING DOWN THE PANJSHIR INSURGENCIES DURING JULY, BUT WHAT WENT ALMOST UNNOTICED IN THE EXCITEMENT OF ALLEGED PAKISTANI INVOLVEMENT WAS THE FACT THAT DAOUD WAS PUTTING DOWN A MANIFESTATION OF "INTERNATIONAL" ISLAM. AFGHAN NATIONALS WHO WERE RINGLEADERS IN THE INSURGENCY, IN ADDITION TO BEING PERSONS ALLEGEDLY SUBVERTED BY PAKISTANI AIMS, WERE REPORTEDLY MEMBERS OF "IKHWAN-AL-MULEMIN", THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, AND IT WAS THE BROTHERHOOD AS PART OF A LARGER GROUP WHICH WAS SAID TO HAVE ENTERED AN AGREE-CONFIDENTIAL

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MENT WITH PAKISTAN'S CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE, GENERAL JAILANI.

13. A FAR BROADER TARGET, AND ONE NOT CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE RESTRAINTS OF PIETY AND TRADITION, WAS THE AFGHAN "LEFT". DAOUD'S WING CLIPPING OF THIS GROUP LATE IN THE YEAR WAS PROPORTIONALLY MORE DRAMATIC. HE FIRED ONE CABINET MINISTER AND DEMOTED ANOTHER, AND HIS BLOODLESS PURGE CONTINUED INTO AFGHANISTAN'S MILITARY FORCES AND ITS BUREAUCRACY. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW HOW MANY PERSONS CAUGHT IN THIS "PURGE" WERE IN FACT LEFTISTS IN THE SENSE THAT THEIR PRIMARY LOYALTY WAS TO THE SOVIET UNION, HOW MANY WERE PERSONS WHO ADVOCATED SOME KIND OF AFGHAN SOCIALISM, HOW MANY WERE SIMPLY MAVERICKS WHO HAD COMMITTED AT SOME POINT SOME ACT WHICH CREATED DOUBT REGARDING THEIR ADHERENCE TO "ESTABLISHMENT WAYS", AND HOW MANY WERE MERELY PROTEGES OF OUTGOING BOSSES WHO, IN WHAT APPEARS FAIRLY WIDELY REGARDED AS AFGHAN BUREAUCRAFTIC TRADITION, HAS TO BE SACRIFICED IN THE BRINGING IN OF NEW BOSSES WHO HAVE THEIR OWN RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

14. ACCOMPANYING THESE CHANGES WERE SUCH VIVID RUMORS OF "ABOLITION" OF THE SHADOWY, LEFTIST

ORIENTED "CENTRAL COMMITTEE", WHICH CAME TO
POWER WITH DAOUD, THE THE EMBASSY FINALLY
CONCLUDED THAT THE BODY HAD COME TO HAVE LITTLE IN
EFFECT BESIDES CEREMONIAL POWER. YET THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS NOT "ABOLISHED" IN ANY
DECLARED, FORMAL SENSE, AND IN FACT THREE OF
ITS MEMBERS WERE RESURRECTED AND SENT FORTH DURING
THE PODGORNÝ VISIT. WEEKS PASS WITHOUT ONE'S
HEARING A WHISPER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE
ACTIVITY, FOLLOWED BY A DAY (AS HAPPENDED
DECEMBER 15, 1975) WHEN THE COMMITTEE IS
MENTIONED THREE TIMES ON PAGE ONE OF A LEADING NEWSPAPER.
DESPITE THIS AMBIGUOUS AND UNTIDY
SITUATION THE EMBASSY CONCLUDES, ALONG WITH
MANY POLITICALLY AWARE AFGHANS, THAT THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS LOST PRIORITY IN CLAIMING
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DAOUD'S ATTENTION.

15. ALONG WITH MOVES AGAINST RIGHT AND LEFT
DAOUD FURTHER COMMITTED HIMSELF TO HIS "AFGHAN
ESTABLISHMENT". MOST NOTABLY HE CAUSE PUBLIC
EXONERATION (OF UNPUBLICIZED CHARGES) BY A

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 KABUL 8458

LIMDIS

MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF HIS MOHAMMADZAI COUSIN AND
LIKELIEST RIVAL FOR POWER GENERAL ABDUL WALI,
WHO UP TO THE TIME OF THE DAOUD COUP HELD THE
POTENT MILITARY POST OF CENTRAL FORCES COMMANDER.
ABUDL WALI, ALONG WITH THIS FATHER, SHAH WALI,
WHO HAD BEEN UDER HOUSE ARREST, LEFT AFGHANISTAN
OCTOBER 22, 1975, TO REJOIN THE DEPOSED KING (WHO IS
ABDUL WALI'S FATHER-IN-LAW) IN ROME. THE CASE
OF JAILED FAMILY MEMBERS HAD FROM SEVERAL
ACCOUNTS BEEN A WEDGE BETWEEN DAOUD AND HIS
IMMEDIATE MOHAMMADZAI KIN (WHO PATTERS OF
COLLATERAL AND MARITAL KINSHIPS ARE UNIMAGINABLE
TO SOMEONE WHOSE CULTURE DOES NOT FORESEE
MARRIAGES OF FIRST COUSINS).

16. DAOUD'S ACTION HAD ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE OF
USE TO THE NATION, AND IT APPEARS DAOUD WAS AWARE
OF THIS CONSEQUENCE: CREATION OF A VIABLE CANDIDATE FOR
SUCCESSION. ALTHOUGH DAOUD IS NOT
THINKING OF VACTING THE AFGHAN SCENE, HE IS
REALIST, PATRIOT AND MOHAMMADZAI ENOUGH TO
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CONSIDER PROVIDING WAYS FOR PASSAGE OF GOVERNMENT
FROM ONE PAIR OF SAFE HANDS (HIS OWN) TO ANOTHER
(THOSE OF SOME SOLID, EFFECTIVE MEMBER OF HIS
FAMILY). SINCE DAOUD MAKES HAST VERY SLOWLY IN
PROVIDING AFGHANISTAN WITH A CONSTITUTION
WHICH MIGHT PROVIDE SOMEHOW FOR SUCCESSION, AND
SINCE HE PROBABLY BELIEVES AS WELL THAT NAY SUCH
PROVISION WOULD BE ONLY AS VALID AS THE RAW FORCE BEHIND IT,
IT BECOMES ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT
THAT DAOUD GIVE THOUGHT TO HIS OWN MORTALITY.
THE NEW CONSTITUTION, DRAFTING OF WHICH IS WELL
ADVANCED, IS LIEKLY TO BE THE MAJOR EVENT OF
1976, AND THE MAIN DRAFTING ISSUE IS UNDOUBTEDLY
THE SUCCESSION. OTHERWISE IT IS
LIKELY TO BE LARGELY AN INSTRUMENT FOR RATIFYING
THE 1973 COUP.

17 AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME ABDUL WALI AND HIS
FATHER WERE UNDERGOING POLITICAL REHABILITATION
DAOUD RELEASED FROM CUSTODY MOUSA SHAFIQ,

AFGHANISTAN'S PRIME MINISTER AT THE TIME OF DAOUD'S JULY 1973 TAKEOVER, ALONG WITH , TO USE OFFICIAL PARLANCE, "A SMALL NUMBER OF OTHERS WHO WERE ARRESTED ON THE 26TH OF SARATAN" (AFGHAN DATE OF DAOUD'S COUP). SUCH MAGNANIMITY WOULD HARDLY RESURRECT FORMER PRIME MINISTER MAIWANDWAL, WHO DIED REPORTEDLY UNDER TORTURE WHILE JAILED, ACCUSED OF PLOTTING AGAINST DAOUD, NOR WILL IT LAY TO REST OTHER ANIMOSITIES CAUSED BY DAOUD AND THOSE HIGH-HANDED YOUNG MEN WHO RODE WITH HIM TO POWER. BUT AS A SIGNAL OF "RETURN TO NORMALCY" IT WAS UNEQUIVOCAL.

18. IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SPERE, THE GOA HAS CONTINUED ITS PLANNING TO DISTRIBUTE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NEW DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND MANY OF DAOUD'S RECENT APPOINTMENTS HAVE BEEN OF PERSONS WITH SOUND TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION. PEOPLE IN THE PROVINCES NOW EXPECT SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS WHICH WILL DIRECTLY AFFECT THEIR POCKETBOOKS. SUCH PROJECTS, TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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FINANCED LARGELY THROUGH OPEC DONORS, HAVE NOT YET BEGUN CONSTRUCTION, BUT ARE FIRMLY FIXED IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE IN EACH PROVINCE. DUE TO BE ARTICULATED IN A SEVEN-YEAR PLAN TO COMMENCE IN 1976, PROJECTS RANGE FROM NEW DAMS TO NEW ROADS, FACTORIES, IRRIGATION WORKS, POWER AND PROCESSING PLANTS. IF THESE PROJECTS DO NOT COME TO FRUITION, THE GOA MAY HAVE PLANTED THE SEEDS OF DISAFFECTION, DESPITE THE PERVASIVE CYNICISM WITH AFGHANS REGARD GOVERNMENTAL PROMISES AND THE AFGHAN CULTURE WHICH DOES NOT EXPECT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN QUICKLY.

19. THE REGIME HAS ALOS ANNOUNCED THAT A LAND REFORM PROGRAM WILL BE LAUNCHED IN 1976. IN SOME AREAS OF AFGHANISTAN SUCH A PROGRAM COULD HAVE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IF POWERFUL LAND-HOLDERS RESIST THE DISTRIBUTION OF THEIR LANDS.

20. LOOKING BACK OVER THE YEAR'S POLITICAL EVENTS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO WONDER WHETHER DAOUD CAN BRING OFF, IN COMPLETE SAFETY TO HIMSELF AND TO HIS REGIME, A FLOUTING OF "THE LEFT", A HARD PUNCH TO THE RIGHT", AND RAISING TO GREATER PROMINENCE A FAMILY NETWORK WWHICH, WHILE NOT DISCREDITED THROUGH ANY UNUSUAL DEBAUCHERY OR CRIME, IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH AFGHANISTAN'S TRADITIONALLY

DODDERING WAYS.

21. THE EMBASSY'S VIEW IS THAT DAOUD NOT ONLY HAS GOTTEN BY WITH THESE ACTS UNSCATHED, BUT THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNLESS CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE IN WAYS WE DO NOT IN FACT PREDICT. HE IS OF COURSE VULNERABLE TO AN ASSASSIN'S BULLET OR AN INCHOATE PALACE REVOLT, A FACT WE BELIEVE DAOUD APPRECIATES WITH CONSIDERABLE POIGNANCY SINCE THE MURDER OF MUJIB-UR-RAHMAN IN BANGLADESH. DAOUD IS 67, BUT HIS HEALTH APPEARS GOOD. THESE CONSIDERATIONS DO NOT SUBTRACT FROM THE FACT THAT DAOUD IS IN SOLID CONTROL OF THIS COUNTRY'S LEVERS OF POWER, AND THAT ANY GROUP WHICH MIGHT OPPOSE HIM

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WOULD BE FACED WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY.
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